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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 000823

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [EU](#) [UN](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: HMG AGREES WITH BURMA DEMARCHE ON REFERENDUM --
BUT CAUTIONS ON SPEED OF ANY NEW EU SANCTIONS

REF: STATE 26677

Classified By: Political Counselor Richard Mills for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel to Nick Alexander, head of Burma policy in the Foreign Office on March 19. Alexander said the UK is in complete agreement with points contained in reftel, underscoring HMG agreement that the Burmese "roadmap" as currently constituted is faulty. He shared UK talking points for use with Burmese officials and in the Security Council (see below at para 3). Alexander said UKUN would support the PRST tabled March 18 by USUN. Alexander added that the UK is in complete agreement with the U.S. position that any referendum must be fair and free, as well as with USG calls for inclusiveness in the Burmese political process.

¶2. (C) Turning to an upcoming visit by a State/IO and Treasury delegation to discuss sanctions, Alexander cautioned that the EU would not be implementing new sanctions in the near term. He said HMG's focus is to press EU Member States to implement sanctions agreed in the fall. HMG intends to use late April EU meetings, however, to gain EU agreement on new targets for sanctions. Alexander noted that the UK does not have extraterritorial powers when it comes to applying sanctions.

¶3. (C) Begin text of UK talking points on Burma Policy for use with Burmese officials and in the UNSC.

-- The "Roadmap" as currently formulated will not bring peace, stability and national reconciliation to Burma. By excluding the opposition and the ethnic groups, the Referendum and the draft Constitution will entrench division, rather than unite the country. They will neither calm the deep discontent which is fueling instability; nor will they meet the concerns of the international community.

-- If the process is to have any hope of addressing the country's needs or meeting the demands of Security Council, a number of key changes need to take place. These include:

-- All key political actors must be part of the political process. ASSK and other political prisoners need to be released and be able to participate fully in the national debate, the referendum campaign and the elections;

-- Removal of articles in the Constitution excluding ASSK from high political office.

-- Removal of military powers to suspend the Constitution.

-- The Constitution should guarantee fundamental rights and envisage some autonomy for the ethnic groups within a unitary state.

-- There needs to be a free and open debate on the Constitution prior to the referendum: laws prohibiting criticism of the National Convention and the referendum rescinded.

-- Greater clarity on the political process: what happens if there is a "no" vote; how will political parties contest the 2010 elections?

End text of UK talking points.

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